

A YOUNG MAN'S VISION

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A SERMON
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*"Your young men shall see visions."
Acts 2:17.*

MANY visions have led to the most disastrous results. When Napoleon had a vision of a universal monarchy over which he should preside, with the French eagle for his ensign, he drenched the lands in blood. Many visions have been wretchedly delusive. Men have dreamed of finding the fairy pleasure in the dark forest of sin; carnal joys have danced before their eyes as temptingly as the mirage in the desert, and they have pursued the phantom forms to their misery in this world, and to their eternal ruin in the next. Mistaking license for liberty, and madness for mirth, they have dreamed themselves into hell! Many dreams have sucked the life-blood out of men as vampires do; men have passed from stern reality into dreamland, and while seemingly awake have continued like sleepwalkers to do all things in their sleep. Many pass all their days in one perpetual daydream—speculating, building castles in the air, thinking of what they would do, and vowing how they would behave themselves. With fine capacities they have driveled away existence, as their theory of life was born of smoke, so the result of their lives has been a cloud. The luxurious indolence of mere resolve, the useless tossing of regrets—these have been all their sluggard life.

For all this, good and grand visions are not unknown; visions which came from the excellent glory; visions which, when young or old men have seen them, have filled them with wisdom, divine grace, and holiness; visions which have worked with such effect upon their minds that they have been lifted up above the level of the sons of men, and made sons of God, co-workers with the eternal! Such visions are given to men whose eyes have been illumined by the Holy Spirit—visions which have come of that eye-salve which only the Holy Spirit can apply; visions which are not bestowed on carnal men nor unveiled to the impure in heart; visions reserved for the men and women elect of God who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and made meet to be partakers of the witness of God, and the testimony of His Son.

All divine things, when they first come to men from the Lord, are as visions because man is so little prepared to believe God's thoughts and ways, that he cannot think them to be real. They appear to us to be too great, too good to be real; we look at them rather as things to be desired and wished for than as things that may be actually ours. It must be so while Jehovah's ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts; it must be so, that even divine mercy should at first be a burden to the prophet who has its message to deliver, and that the eternal promise should be a vision to the seer who first receives it. We are so gross and carnal, even when most clarified and made fit to receive divine impressions, God's spiritual messages and directions to us must usually at the first float dimly before the sense, and only in later thoughts become solid and clear. We must take care that we do not neglect heavenly monitions through fear of being considered visionary; we must not be staggered even by the dread of being styled *fanatical*, or out of our minds, for to stifle a thought from *God* is no mean sin.

How much of good in this world would have been lost if good men had quenched the first half-fashioned thoughts which have flitted before them! I mean, for instance, had Martin Luther taken the advice of his teacher when he said to him, "Go your way, silly monk! Go to your cell and pray God, and if it is His will, He will reform the abuses of this church, but what have *you* to do with it?" Supposing the agitated monk had administered an opiate to his soul, what then? Doubtless the gospel to Luther at

the first was dim enough; and the idea of reform most vague and indistinct; but had he closed his heart to his vision, how long might not the Romish darkness have brooded over the multitudes of Europe? And George Fox, that most eminent of dreamers who dreamed more and more vividly than any other man, where had been all the testimonies for a spiritual religion? Where all the holy influences for benevolence, for peace, for anti-slavery, for I know not what besides which have streamed upon this world through the agency of the Society of Friends, if the wild Quaker had been content to let his impressions come and go and be forgotten? These things, which nowadays are ordinary Christian doctrines, were considered in his day to be but the prattle of fanatics, even as the reforms which some of us shall live to see are denounced as revolutionary, or ridiculed as Utopian! O young men, if you have received a thought which dashes ahead of your times, hold to it, and work at it till it comes to something! If you have dreamed a dream from the Lord, turn it over and over again till you are quite sure it is not steam from a heated brain, or smoke from hell—and when it is clear to your own heart that it is fire from off God's altar, then work and pray and wait your time. Perhaps it may take 50 years to work that thought out, or what is worse, you may never live to see it realized, but what of that? You may have to leave that thought sown in the dust, but the thought will not die; it may produce a harvest when you are with the angels! Do not, I pray you, because the thing happens to seem new, or too enthusiastic, or too far ahead, be snubbed into putting it into a corner, but take care of it, and nurture it; and if it is not of God, a little experience will disabuse you of it, let us hope. But if it *is* of the Lord, you will grow in your attachment to it, and by-and-by God will find an opportunity for you to make it practical. The great Father of Spirits does, in fact, say to you when He puts a great design into your keeping, as Pharaoh's daughter said to Jochebed, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." And though the Moses that you nurse may not deliver Israel in your lifetime, yet shall you have your wages if you nurse the thought for God!

Many suggestions which come from God to men are not so much visions to *them* as they are to the outside world. And need we wonder at this? Why, men of science and art have to endure the same ordeal. Stephenson declares that he will make a machine which will run without horse-power, at the rate of 12 miles an hour—and how the Tory benches of the House of Commons, loaded then as now with stupidity, roared at the man as a born fool! How was it proved to a demonstration that if the engine began to work, the wheels might revolve, but the engine never would move an inch, or if it moved at a great speed, the passengers would not be able to breathe? Yet Stephenson lived to see his dream fulfilled, and we have lived to see it a much more wonderful power still. Now, if men of science can endure this, and if we members of the Baptist Mission remember still the roars of laughter which were launched by Sydney Smith against "the inspired cobbler," when he talked about the conquest of India for the Lord Jesus Christ, we may well be prepared, when we obtain an inspiration from God, to put up with a world of scorn, opposition, and contempt for a little time, and to say, "Never mind, there is a day coming that shall reverse the hasty judgment of this world; you sons of darkness are not a fair jury to sit upon questions of the light of God; you blind men who know not God, nor the glory of His power are not qualified to mount the bench, and sit in judgment upon thoughts which flash from the eternal mind; you may give your judgment, but the Lord shall reverse it, and time which is always with the truth of God, will before long turn the laugh in another direction."

With this rather too long preface about dreaming, I will now confess that, after my own fashion, I too have seen a vision. And though you should say of me in days to come, "Behold, this dreamer comes," yet, as he that has a dream is bid to tell his dream, so I tell mine. My dream is this—I have seen in vision, missionary spirit in England, now so given to slumber, marvelously quickened, awakened, and revived! I have seen—the wish was father to the sight, I have seen the ardor of our first missionary days return to us! I have seen young men eager for the mission field, and old men and fathers sitting in united council to correct mistakes, to devise new methods, or to strengthen the old ones, so that by any means the great chariot of Christ might roll onwards, and that His victories might be more rapid. I thought that I saw, from one end of England to the other, the Christian church stirred with a deep sense of her duty to the heathen Christian ministers full of pangs and sorrows on account of dying myriads. I thought that I saw Christian men and women universally contributing generously of their substance, while men fitted

for the work pushed forward at the call of the great Lord of the harvest to toil in the great harvest field. I have seen such a vision, and by God's grace, we shall see it a fact! Would to God that the captivity of our Zion might be turned—then would we be like they who dream; then should our mouth be filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing while the heathen would cry, "The Lord has done great things for them."

First, this evening, I shall *try to justify my vision, and show that it is by no means unreasonable*; secondly, I shall in a few words *elaborate the vision or give the details of it*; and then, in the third place, as time may suit us, I shall endeavor to *promote its realization*.

I. First, LET US JUSTIFY OUR VISION.

We have dreamed that the missionary spirit was suddenly revived among us, that missions were pushed on with greater ardor, and that God vouchsafed to them a far greater blessing than He has done of late. There have been more incoherent dreams than *that* in this world, and for this reason—that which we have dreamed of is evidently needed. Brothers and sisters, we are not among those who are prepared to croak and complain at the very first difficulty that may arise in a great enterprise, but no man can look upon our own Baptist Mission, and I suppose we are not much worse than others, without feeling that there is a pretty general flagging in missionary interest. And albeit that the funds may not much have fallen off, yet the annual recurrence of a debt, which is far from being welcome, together with other matters, goes to show that missionary zeal needs rekindling. This results partly from the fact that the novelty of the thing has worn off; the work having now been on the anvil for 50 years and more, and partly because we have had few very startling incidents of late to evoke a display of enthusiasm. That the missionary fire exists is certain, for when the recent events in Jamaica acted as it were as a refreshing breeze, the embers glowed, and flamed anew. It is certainly there, for the heart of the church is alive. It is there, but it is slumbering. You who remember the thundering voice of William Knibb, and the great meetings which would be gathered when some such brethren returned home to tell what God had done among the heathen, must feel that you have fallen upon dull, uninteresting days in mission life; it is as when the thing is flat and stale, and when men have reached the dregs of the wine, and the new wine is not in the cluster. Well, then, if it is so, let it be remembered that missionary zeal ought not to flag; if there is any one point in which the Christian church ought to keep its fervor at a white heat; it is concerning *missions* to the heathens! If there is anything about which we cannot tolerate lukewarmness, it is in the matter of sending the gospel to a dying world; how can we expect, in such an enterprise, with difficulties to our poor weakness so insuperable, that we shall ever succeed if any of our strength is left unused? With all we have we are weak enough, but if we send but *part* of the army to the battle, if we exert but half of our strength, how can we expect that the blessing of God shall rest upon us? Depend upon it that the flagging of zeal at home acts like a canker abroad. When the heart of Christianity in England does not throb vigorously, every single limb of the missionary body feels the decline, and there is not a missionary anywhere, from the snows of Labrador, to the burning heats of Africa, who is not enervated and injured when the Christian public at home begin to weary in well doing. It needs, then; it *imperatively* needs, that our vision should be made a *fact*.

We may be excused our vision because *it is very possible that it may be realized*. It is not a thing too hard to look for. It was far harder work, surely, to have *established* the mission than it will be most thoroughly and earnestly to *revive* it! If we will but inquire into what may have been the causes of any decline that exists, we shall not find them, I think, to be very deep, nor to be difficult of remedy; they are but superficial, and a little loving earnestness will soon remove them. Brothers and sisters, as a denomination we are beginning to cluster more closely around our standard; we have been up to now somewhat scattered over the field—isolated, divided, and therefore weak. But now we feel that our strength must lie, under God, in our *unity*, and our ranks are classing each man to his brother; we feel the fire of sacred love burning in our hearts, and as we come together and begin to talk of the difficulties before us in a fraternal spirit, they will all vanish! Lovingly correcting errors, carefully removing excrescences, and boldly advancing, the stone shall be rolled away from the sepulcher before we reach it, for if not in God's name, and by His strength, we will never roll it away ourselves, and if there has

been a flagging, this very meeting, in which there are young and ardent spirits, shall help to supply the material with which to kindle a fire which shall nevermore grow dim.

More than that—it is not only possible that our dream may become a reality, *but it is very probable*, for so it always has been. If ever God's church has declined for a little while, unexpectedly there has been yielded a season of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord. We know not what God has in store; He is great at surprises! When the devil is most secure upon his throne, then God springs a mine, and blows his empire into atoms. Just when the wise virgins, and the foolish alike have allowed their lamps to burn low, then is the cry heard, "Behold, the bridegroom comes!" and those virgins arise and trim their lamps. So will it be among us. I am hopeful that in answer to earnest prayer, God will speedily send among us a general intensity of desire for the glory of Christ, accompanied by broken hearts, and weeping eyes for the perishing heathen, and a solemn resolve that in Jehovah's strength we will spare no pains, and neglect no efforts by which we may make the gospel known unto the ends of the earth. Yes, a thorough renovation of the missionary society, a resurrection of the mission spirit, and an awakening of our churches is delightfully probable—it were wretched indeed, if it were not so!

One thing more we will say upon this topic, namely, *that such a renewal is solemnly required of us*. What are our personal obligations to the Crucified? What owe we *not* to the gospel which has delivered us from an eternity of woe, and has guaranteed to us an everlasting career of blessedness? This night, redeemed, regenerated, adopted, justified, sanctified, with your feet upon the rock, a song in your mouth, and your goings established—will you not feel it to be a call from heaven that you should be in earnest to gather in the Lord's chosen out of all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth? Did our Savior slumber in His life-work? Was He tardy in His service for our redemption? Then might we grow lax? But if setting His face to Jerusalem, He panted for the baptism in which He was to be baptized, and was straitened until it was accomplished, then He claims of us, according to our measure, the same steadfastness of resolve, and perseverance of purpose, and sacrifice of self! I charge you, young men, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be not slow to spend and be spent for Him. *All* is too little—shall we give Him *less* than all? Fervent services are too poor—shall we be lukewarm? Descend, O heavenly fire, and now inflame us, for less than Your flames cannot enable us to live as live we should!

I will not tarry upon this point. You have already forgiven me my dream.

II. LET US PROCEED TO ELABORATE THE VISION.

I was asked principally to address young men this evening; I am a young man myself, and therefore if I utter anything exceedingly visionary, you will observe its justification in the text, "Your young men shall see visions." My dream seemed to take this shape: *In order that missionary work should be reformed, revived, and carried on with energy, and with hope of success, it seemed necessary that especially among our young members there should be a revival of intense and earnest prayer, and anxious sympathy with the missionary work.* The power of prayer can never be overrated. They who cannot serve God by preaching need not regret it if they can be mighty in prayer. The true strength of the church lies there; this is the sinew which moves the arm of Omnipotence. If a man can but pray, he can do anything! He who knows how to overcome the Lord in prayer has heaven and earth at his disposal; there is nothing a man cannot accomplish if he can but prevail with God in prayer. Now, I will not say that we ought to have our prayer meetings for missionary objectives more largely attended—everybody knows this, but does everybody try to attend? But I will say this, which is more likely to be forgotten, that it were well if we had *settled* private seasons of devotion each of us, especially to intercede with God for the conversion of the heathen. It will be a notable day when the young men of this society say, "Not only will we attend the prayer meetings for this objective, but we will each one as before the Lord, make it a matter of conscience that there shall be at least one hour in the week sacredly hedged around, and spent in private prayer for the missionary work." Beneath the banyan tree you will not stand surrounded by black faces to tell of Krishnu's Christ; but in your own little room by the old armchair you will as surely be bringing down showers of blessings upon the heathen by importunate entreaties. Here our old men and our matrons, as well as our young men and maidens, may unite. If it is so, that the entire church shall send up one impassioned, continuous, prevalent cry to God, "O Lord, make bare Your arm for Christ, and for His truth!" verily, verily, I say unto you He shall avenge you speedily

though He bear long with you! Your prayers shall come up unto the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, and He will reveal the glory of His power!

Next, if our young men who see visions will *follow up their prayers with practical effort, then we shall see in our churches a larger and more efficient staff of collectors and contributors*. We should then find men who would give of their substance as a matter of principle, give themselves, or in other fair proportion so that the kingdom of Christ should never have an empty treasury. I speak to some who sit often in this place who need not to have a word said to them by way of stirring them up to generosity, for I can glory in them in this respect, that they do beyond all that I could expect, but I wish that the same spirit of giving were paramount throughout all the church, that men would give, not because they are asked, nor by way of emulation or compulsion, but because God has given to them, and they recognize their stewardship. A few men in a church may often move the whole to generosity; the example of a few and those few, perhaps, not the richest, may be contagious to the whole mass. And a few earnest young people, especially, may often push right and left with their proverbial enthusiasm till they have stirred the inert mass, and compelled the whole body to be generous to the cause of Jesus Christ!

Up till now my dream has been reasonable you will say. I will now be more visionary; if we were all praying for missions, and all giving for their support, it might be very well asked of us, "What do you do more than others?" For what Romanist is there who is not zealous for the spread of *his* religion? What *heathen* is there who does not give quite as much as any of us give, yes, and a great deal more than we give, to his superstitions? But, supposing next to this, that there should be a number of young men here who know each other very well, young men who have been trained in the same sanctuary, nurtured in the same church—who should meet together tomorrow, or at such other time as shall be convenient, and say to one another, "Now, we are in business; we have just commenced in life, and God is prospering us, more or less; we are taking wives to ourselves; our children are coming around us, but still, we trust we are never going to permit ourselves to be swallowed up in a mere worldly way of living—now, what ought *we* to do for missions?" And suppose the inquiry should be put, "Is there one among us who could devote himself to go and teach the heathen for us? As we, most of us, may not have the ability, or do not feel called to the work, is there one out of 12 of us young men who have grown up side by side in the Sunday school who has the ability, and who feels called to go? Let us make it a matter of prayer, and when the Holy Spirit says, 'Separate So-and-So to the work,' then we, the other 11 who remain, will do this—we will say to him, 'Now, brother, you cannot stay at home to make your fortune or to earn a competence; you are now giving yourself up to a very arduous and earnest enterprise, and we will support you. We know you, we have confidence in you; you go down into the pit—we will hold the rope. Go forth in connection with our own denominational society, but we will bear the expense year by year among ourselves! Have you faith enough to go; trusting that the Lord will provide? Then we will have faith enough, and generosity enough to say that your needs shall be to our care. You *preach* for Christ; *we* will make money for Christ. When you open the Bible for Christ, we will be taking down the shop shutters for Christ; and while you are unfolding the banner of Christ's love, we will be unfolding the calicos, or selling the groceries; and we pledge ourselves *always* to set aside your portion, because as our brother, you are doing *our* work.'" I wish we had such godly clubs as these—holy confederacies of earnest young men who thus would love their missionary, feel for him, hear from him continually, and undertake to supply his support. Why, on such a plan as that, I should think they would give 50 times, 100 times as much as ever they are likely to give to an impersonal *society*, or to a man whose name they only know, but whose face they never saw. I wonder whether I shall ever live to see a club of that kind. I wonder whether such a club will ever spring up in the midst of this church, or any of the churches in London. If it shall be so, I shall be glad to have seen a vision of it!

Further, I have also dreamed that there would spring up in our churches a very large number of young men who would count it to be the very highest ambition of their lives to give themselves up to the work of Jesus Christ abroad, and who seeing that in London and throughout England men may hear the gospel if they will, while many of the heathen cannot hear it, like or no, would feel it to be their duty to serve Christ in the foreign field. And I have wondered whether we should have these noble fellows

coming by the score, and saying, "Here am I, send me." Then I have considered whether God would pour out enough of the missionary spirit upon these men to make them say, "Well, the Missionary Society is in debt and cannot take us; it has enough men to support already. It is doing a good work enough, I will not interfere with it; I do not want to be a burden to any brethren; will you send me out, and let me exercise my faith in God, only having this for my comfort, that you will stand at my back and give me what you can, while I will only draw upon you for what I cannot get for myself?" I wonder whether we shall see 50 or 100 missionaries within the next year or two leaving our shores, whose passage has been paid, and who will land in some foreign country with just enough about them to keep them till the language has been learned, and who will then, in confidence in God, set about working to support themselves? I set Paul before you, young men; when he preached the gospel at the first, he was a tent-maker, and he earned his own living. Are there no occupations in these days by which a man may earn his living, and yet preach the gospel? It is not the best thing to do—the best thing is for a man to give all his time to his ministry, but if you cannot have the best, you must have the second best. Are there not to be found physicians who in China and in India, would not only procure subsistence, but much more, and might proclaim the gospel at the same time? Thank God there is such a thing as a medical mission! Thank God that the profession of medicine has not been behind in sending heroes to the field! But are there no other occupations? Young men, are there no clerkships to be had in India? I find men going out there by scores to make their fortunes, and ruin their constitutions; and I see young women going out to get married to Indian settlers almost on speculation. Have we no young men and women who will go across the sea, and find their way round the Cape of Good Hope to preach the gospel, intending to use their commercial pursuits as a means of introduction and support? Surely it must be so!

I know that at this present moment there are hundreds of Christian men living along the coasts of South America, especially of the Brazils and the Argentine Republic, where skilled artisans, engineers, and such like are in constant request by the government. And I have often hoped to hear that some of these men were originating Christian missions; I have often wondered why more has not been done of that kind. We hear of our young brethren going forth to Morocco, to Algiers, to Turkey, and Egypt—they are in demand in almost every part of the earth, for the young men of England are the very pick and prime of humanity! The various trades which are connected with machinery are scarcely to be taught except by their means. What about their *faith* if they do not become evangelists? O young men and women, what grand opportunities must open up before some of you! I am sure they will, and if you did but set your hearts to it with a full resolve that you would not live the dead-and-alive life of most of us, but would distinguish yourselves in Christ's service, what might you not achieve! If there were a will, there would be a way—and if there were a fixed purpose, God would send the means! And He who quickened you to such a degree of spiritual life that you could not rest unless you were telling the gospel to the ungodly; would not let His providence so obstruct His grace as to shut the door in your face when you were willing to be serviceable to His cause.

"That is a dream," says one. Well, may some of you dream it, and in the midst of the dream may there rise up before you a face which, as it shall by degrees settle and become clear, and you shall discern its features, shall be wonderfully like your own; and as you wake may you have to say, "Here am I, Lord, send me; for where You would have me go, there will I go to proclaim the name, and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh when shall I see once again the missionary going from door to door, determined, according to his Master's command, that whatever things they set before him he will eat, believing that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and that he is to expect to find his hire among those to whom he preaches the gospel? When shall I see once again the missionary believing that the acceptance of hospitality is the master-key of missions, and that the eating of the strangers' salt is the nearest way to put before them the bread of life, and the reception of hospitable courtesy the very stepping-stone towards the giving out of the precious gospel? May we live to see this! We shall, by God's grace, if His Spirit visits us!

III. Lastly, and but very briefly—what shall we do to assist THE REALIZATION OF THIS VISION?

We can all do something if we love the Lord, and that something will be eminently a blessing to ourselves. If ever we are to see the missionary spirit brought to its very highest and most perfect condition, *it must be by each individual's own personal piety mounting to the very highest degree of elevation*. Why, we are not half saints—we seem, many of us to forget what sainthood means! We are content to be just saved, like the drowning man dragged to shore just alive, and that is all. O that we were not satisfied with this, but that our love to Christ was on fire; our hope in Jesus Christ bright and clear; our faith in God firm and unstaggering! O that we served Christ, not at a snail's pace, but within the utmost energy of the best conditioned manhood! O that we loved Christ, and worked for Christ up to the last ounce at which the engine could be driven! O that we could but just for *once* see what manhood could do when God was in it! O that some of us were raised up to be as Brainerd; living, dying, through love to Christ! O that we were men who were conquered by divine love, led in fetters as slaves to the blessed captivity of love to the souls of men! May it grow into a passion with you, men and women, to snatch fire-brands from the flame! You will never be very useful until it is so. If holy work is a mere diversion for your leisure moments, you will do nothing; you must make a trade of it, a solemn occupation of it; it must be your calling, your meat, and your drink to do the will of Him who sent you. When the Christian church glows in this fashion it will swell with an intense heat like a volcano whose tremendous furnaces cannot be contained within itself, but its sides begin to move and bulge, and then after a rumbling and a heaving, a mighty sheet of fire shoots right up to heaven, and afterwards streams of flaming lava run from its red lips down, burning their way along the plain beneath. Oh, to get such a fire for God's cause into the heart of the Christian church till she began to heave and throb with unquenchable emotion! Then a mighty sheet of the fire-prayer should go up towards heaven, and afterwards the burning lava of her all-conquering zeal should flow over all lands till all nations should inquire, "What is this new thing in the earth, and what is this modern miracle and what is this cross of Christ for which men live and die?"

I would say, as subsidiary to this great thing, which the main matter, is tonight, *that young men and young women would do well to feed the flame of their zeal with greater information as to the condition of the world in reference to our mission-work*. I wish that those who supply us with our periodical missionary literature had an idea of the great difficulty there is in keeping awake while reading it. I should be glad if they could by any means put a small allowance of salt into it, or serve it up in a more tempting form. I do not plead for making it into light literature, far from it, but if our editors could give us something that would tempt the literary or the spiritual palate, it would be well. But, young men, you are not dependent upon periodical literature; I almost regret that there is such a thing; there are solid books to be read; there are libraries teeming with the works of missionaries—their travels, their adventures. You can read of the history of heathen nations—their desolations, their needs, their crimes, their idolatries, their infamies. There is a great literature for you; you may not have time to get through it all, but if you read *some* of it, I think you will feel a great accession to your zeal.

When you have gained such information, which may be as fuel to the fire, I pray you *keep yourselves right in this matter by constant, energetic efforts in connection with works at home*. Those who do not serve God at home are of no use anywhere. It is all very well to talk about what you would do if you could speak to the Hindus; nonsense! What do you do when you are in the streets of Whitechapel? You will be of no use whatever in Calcutta unless you are of use in Poplar or Bermondsey! The human mind is the same everywhere; its sins may take another form, but there are the same difficulties in one place as in another. It is all very well for you to turn a sort of Don Quixote in imagination, and dream of what you would do if you went out upon a spiritual crusade as a heavenly knight-errant, tilting against windmills, but just try your hand at the conversion of that young man who sits next to you in the pew. See what you can do for Jesus Christ in the shop; see whether you can serve your Master in that little Bible class of which you are a member. Rest assured that no missionary ardor really burns in the breast of any man who does not love the souls of those who live in the same house, and dwell in the same neighborhood. Give me that man for a missionary of whom it is said that when he took a lodging in a house, all the other inhabitants were brought to God within six months; or he was a son, and his father was unconverted, but he gave the Lord no rest till he saw his parent saved; or he was

a tradesman, and while he was pushing his business earnestly, he always found time to be an evangelist. *That* is the man who will maintain missionary fervor alive at home, and *that* is the man who will help to promote missionary effort abroad.

Brothers and sisters, here are the practical points—have a higher degree of piety, a wider and more extensive knowledge, and a more practical zeal in God's work near to your hand.

But oh, do make sure that you are saved yourselves! Do make sure that you yourselves know the Christ whom you profess to teach! That missionary-box; what is it but an infamous sham if you put into it your offering, but withhold your heart? You talk about missionary collecting, missionary meetings, lectures to the young, and I know not what, when you yourself are a stranger to the power of vital godliness! No, my dear friends, begin at home! May the Lord begin with *you*. O young men, young women, are you yet unsaved? Then instead of your pitying the heathen, the heathen may well pity you! How might a heathen with a tender heart stand here and say, "If that Bible is true; if that gospel which you talk of has really come from God; if Christ is the Savior, and if there is no salvation but of Him, then how I pity you who have heard about it, and yet have rejected it! How I pity you, because your own Savior, whom you profess to serve, out of His own mouth of love has said it—that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for you!" Oh, then, let it be tonight that you give your heart to God! And when you have given your heart to Him, *then* think of the matter of which I have spoken.

God grant that my vision may become a fact. May you help to make it so, and Christ shall have the glory. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke 10:1-21.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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